

WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes-March 10, 2004
Turkey Run Inn-Wagon Wheel Room, Parke County
Marshall, Indiana

Members present:

Allen County-Ron James
Allen County-Paul McAfee (alternate)
Cass County-Mercedes Brugh
DNR-Steve Morris
Fountain County-Bob Quirk
Huntington County-Mike Mettler
Knox County-Tracy Newberry
Miami County-Ken Einselen
Parke County-John Isaacs
Posey County-Tom Straw
Sullivan County-John Gettinger
Tippecanoe County-Norman (Lucky)
Neiburger
Vermillion County-Mike Craig
Vigo County-Keith Ruble (alternate)
Warren County-Louise Jewell

Proxies:

Adams County-Lucky Neiburger
Jay County-Lucky Neiburger
Wells County-Mike Mettler

Voting Members not represented:

Carroll County
Gibson County
Wabash County

Non-Voting Members not present:

INDOT
DNR-DHPA
IDEM
Dept. of Commerce-Tourism

Commission and DNR staff present:

Susan Benner-WRHCC Exec. Director
Cynthia Webb-DNR Outdoor Recreation

Others present:

Dan & Elise Warrick
Don Jewell
Rory Robinson-NPS-RTCA
Bernie Dahl-Banks of the Wabash

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

John Gettinger called the meeting to order at 1:20 pm. All attendees introduced themselves.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF JANUARY 14, 2004 MEETING MINUTES

Minutes were approved as written except for the report Water Trail Meeting dated December 8th, 2003. Susan Benner pointed out an error in the second paragraph. The sentence read Chamber of Commerce's and it should read Chambers of Commerce.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

John Gettinger reported that all projects are moving ahead. John has been going to various meetings and introducing himself to everyone.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

See attached report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance

John Gettinger spoke of establishing a financial committee. The members of the commission decided to table this business until New Business.

Steve Morris passed out a financial report to commission members. Steve explained how expenditures related to the established budget. Steve reported that the commission has not been charged for UPS shipping yet this year but may be charged before the year is out. Steve reported that mileage rates for commissioner travel increased from .28/mile to .34/mile as of January 1st. Also, due to exceeding allotted minutes, the latest telephone bill was more than double the normal billing. If this continues, we will upgrade our calling plan. Current expenses for the phone bill, office supplies and Susan's postage needs to be signed off on by the President. Ron James made a motion to adopt the financial report. Mercedes Brugh seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Water Trail - See attached report.

Steve Morris reported that Representative Dale Grubb wrote to DNR Director, John Goss, after receiving a letter of concern about possibly restricting motorized boats from the water trail. Dan Warrick, the person who wrote the letter to Representative Grubb, discussed the issue with several commission members before the start of the commission meeting. Commission members explained to Mr. Warrick that no restrictions were intended. In order to avoid confusion, the commission decided not to use terms "canoe trail" or "canoe camp" and to instead use the terms "water trail" and "water trail camps".

Mike Mettler offered to chair the water trail committee.

Wabash Video – See attached report.

Tom Straw discussed the report from the Video Committee. The hand out given to everyone showed the items discussed that might be included in the WRHCC video. The Video Committee is in favor of using "land use" as the theme for the proposed video.

Lucky Neiburger asked about intended audience and proposed length of the video. Tom Straw responded that the video would be approximately 30 minutes in length and intended for a general public audience. Ron James mentioned the need to plan for television commercial time. Lucky Neiburger suggested other funding sources be sought besides WFYI. It was also mentioned that videos done by the Wabash River Parkway Commission and New Harmony could be used as examples. Mike Craig suggested an electronic version similar to one done by the state of Illinois. Bernie Dahl emphasized the need to show stewardship of the river in the video. Tom Straw welcomed further input from commission members.

Education

- **Teach the Wabash**

Susan has talked to the mayor of Peru about using the Depot in Peru, Miami County to possibly hold the “Teach the Wabash” this summer. Tentative dates are June 1st, 2nd and the 29th. Susan said she has several speakers lined up. The Peru location would be for the northern end of the state. For the southern end, Tracy Newberry is going to try to locate a place for “Teaching the Wabash” in Vincennes.

- **4-H**

John Gettinger spoke about the 4-H projects that include the Wabash. Children who have completed 4-H projects use rafts to take an all-day trip. John also said all the 8th graders in Sullivan County have taken this trip.

Newsletter

Susan Benner reported the March edition of the Wabash Reflections newsletter had been emailed and posted on the website. Three people were chosen to submit articles for the May newsletter. Those people were Keith Ruble, Tom Straw and Don Whitehead. These articles are due May 3, 2004.

OLD BUSINESS

Corridor Management Plan

Rory Robinson informed the commission of having sent out the Corridor Management Plan (CMP). The CMP is on-line. The website is <http://www.in.gov/wrhcc>. Susan Benner said she mailed out nine of the CMP's. Paul McAfee asked about the cost of producing the CMP. The cost was approximately \$11 each. Steve Morris reported there was an article in the Logansport Tribune-Star about the Corridor Management Plan.

501(c)(3) Status

Ron James reported on his findings. In order to establish Friends of the Wabash as a valid 501(c)(3) there would need to be more history to date of the organization. We would also need officers to certify officers and a corporation address. Because there are no existing officers of Friends of the Wabash, Inc., the organization should probably be considered dissolved. Ron also said it would cost \$250.00 to set up a new organization.

There was discussion as to whether to form a 501(c)(3) or not. Lucky Neiburger questioned the commission as to whether they still wanted a 501(c)(3) and if so how to set it up. Considerable discussion followed. Ron James explained that the WRHCC could actually file as a 501(c)(3), but would then be constrained by state spending procedures. Tom Straw noted that universities have associated foundations. Bernie Dahl expressed concerns about possible collusion legalities of a commission formed non-profit. Other commission members expressed similar concerns. Steve Morris thought it would be best for the commission to have the Attorney General take a look at what is being proposed.

501(c)(3) Status (continued)

Lucky Neiburger made a motion to create a separate non-profit corporation and file a 1023 exemption. John Isaacs seconded the motion. Motion passed with one opposition vote.

Updating Agenda Format

By consensus, it was decided that speakers be put at the beginning of the meetings. Lucky Neiburger moved to table further discussion about the meeting agenda format.

County Appointments to the WRHCC

There are 18 counties that have sent in their appointments. We are still waiting for Gibson County appointment.

Executive Director Contract

John Gettinger signed Susan Benner's contract on March 1st. Steve Morris plans to track down the contract at the Attorney General's Office and put a rush on it. John Gettinger proposed formation of a personnel committee, but no action was taken on the idea.

NEW BUSINESS**Speakers and Locations for Upcoming WRHCC Meetings**

In May, a representative from IDNR-Outdoor Recreation will update the commission on recreational WRHCF projects.

In July, a representative from Purdue Fisheries Department will speak about a fish study currently being conducted on the Wabash River.

In September, the WRHCC meeting will be at Merom Conference Center in Sullivan County. John Gettinger will also arrange for overnight accommodations at the Conference Center.

Rory Robinson suggested using George Rogers Clark National Historical Park, Vincennes for one of the meeting locations.

Letters Sent

Susan sent a letter to the Mayor of Delphi in support of Delphi's Transportation Enhancement application.

A letter of support for Wabash Expedition's grant application was sent to Sullivan County SWCD.

Susan sent a letter to those that attended the public meetings, announcing that the CMP is finished.

Susan also sent letters requesting support for Transportation Enhancement funding to Senators Bayh and Lugar.

Letters Received

Susan received Representative Sheila Klinker's letter of support for De-Trash the Wabash.

Susan also received newsletters from Historic Forks of the Wabash, Little River Wetlands Project, Inc., The Confluence from the Little Turtle Waterway Corporation, and electronic newsletter of the Wabash and Erie Canal Inc.

Susan received American River's announcement of River Lobby Day on Tuesday, May 25th, an event to deliver the message of river conservation to Congress.

Susan received the "Spring 2004 Training Courses" and "Proposal Writing Seminars, Spring 2004", both from the Foundation Center.

Other Items

Tom Straw made a motion to create a finance committee. Tracy Newberry seconded the motion. Motion passed. The finance committee consists of Ron James, Chairperson, Tom Straw, Steve Morris, and John Gettinger.

Keith Ruble thought it would be an idea to have someone from finance to find information that could help the WRHCC review its finances and help to advise the commission.

Rory gave a report from the retreat. Rory will get the results back to the commission in two to three days. Some of the things Rory will report on will be, what as a commission would you like to do in the next few years, a list identifying opportunities and concerns, and a list of what commission members perceive their roles to be.

Keith Ruble passed out a document entitled "Step-by-step Application Information" which provides a general account of the steps necessary for a landowner to complete in order to enroll into the WRP program and record a WRP easement. Keith Ruble is going to check with Eric Myers about WRP and matching it with Indiana Heritage Trust funds. He will then report back to the commission at the next meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Water Trail meeting is Tuesday, April 6th, 2004 at Purdue University at the Horticulture Building at 1:30 pm.

GENERAL DISCUSSION**Comments by Commission Alternates**

None

Comments by Visitors

Don Jewell commented that he enjoyed the retreat.

Final Comments by Commission Members

Steve Morris expressed concerns with the 501(c)(3) motion that was passed earlier. Steve noted that he had abstained from voting on the motion.

Mike Craig has similar concerns with collusion or conflict of interests regarding a 501(c)(3).

Lucky Neiburger mentioned the Wabash Parkway is creating a 501(c)(3).

Ron James recommended the commission get an opinion by the DNR chief legal counsel.

ADJOURNMENT

Keith Ruble made a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned.